

THE CONNECTING LINK

Connecting together to worship and praise our God!



DECEMBER 2019

Worship with Us

SUNDAYS

10:00 A.M. (Traditional Worship) with Sunday School during the school year for ages 3 through high school

5:00 P.M. (Contemporary Worship)

Contact Us

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church
8426 West 95th Street, Hickory Hills, IL 60457
Phone: 708-598-3100
E-mail: hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org

Visit Us Online

www.hickoryhillspres.org

Need a Hospital Visit?

If you know someone who needs a hospital visit, please call the church office at 708-598-3100 and leave a message on the office voice mail. Due to federal privacy regulations, the hospitals never call the church, even if they ask for your church membership information.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS

- To those who hurt you, forgiveness
- To a friend, your heart
- To a child, a good example
- To an opponent, tolerance
- To a customer, service
- To all, charity
- To yourself, respect

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A LETTER FROM REV. EDIE



Advent means waiting, anticipation, coming...

... but when I look around it seems that Christmas has already arrived. I saw the first glimpse of Christmas decorations before Halloween. Commercials with Santa began on November 1 and the grocery store was playing Christmas music two weeks ago. In our mad rush to enjoy all things Christmas, we miss the waiting require for the coming of Christ. Our world has divorced the faith-filled meaning of Christmas from the celebrations of lights and consumerism (*not that this is a new issue – read A Christmas Carol for proof*) and while we also enjoy many of these traditions, it is vital that we also remember why we celebrate. It is important that we as God's people slow down, pause, and wait for the coming of Christ.

When I was a kid, family tradition dictated that the morning after Thanksgiving, Christmas began in our home. The Friday many spent shopping was always spent hauling box after box of decorations out of our basement and sprinkling the entire house in Christmas decorations. Except for one small item. You see though my mom had several Nativity sets, she was adamant that Jesus does not come until Christmas. This meant that as kids, all of the Nativity sets, except for the one we were allowed to play and pretend with, had no Jesus in them for the entire season; until Christmas Eve. Jesus was simply nowhere to be found because – he hadn't been born yet. Mom would confiscate all the Jesus figures and hide them away and then on Christmas Eve they were set in place – the Christ child born and laid in a manger.

As kids, this seemed just a strange quirk that comes from mom having started a second career in ministry when the kids went off to school. We were the only family we knew whose mom hid Jesus, and it became something of a running joke. But now, as I reflect each year on the rush to Christmas, it has become important to me that I also learn to pause, to slow down, to anticipate and yes, to wait. Advent is about waiting; we are waiting not just for the celebration to remember the birth of the Messiah. We are waiting for Christ to come again. We are waiting for the reign of God to set all things right, for the new heaven and the new earth to be ushered in among us. Still we are waiting.

This waiting has purpose, it is not just sitting around, it is anticipation. The waiting of Advent is pregnant (*pun intended*) with symbols and signs. The waiting of Advent is about hope in what is to come in the Messiah. The waiting of Advent is about peace, the peace of Christ that reigns in our hearts, but also the shalom of God that will one day rule over all things. The waiting of Advent is about joy, the joy that can only come from the gift of God. And finally, the waiting of Advent is about love, the love that God has for each of us as children, not just believers. We are beloved of God; this is why the Son came in the first place.

In this season of beauty, busyness, and celebrations; I want to invite you

to slow down, pause, and wait. Wait for the promise of God to be fulfilled. Anticipate not just the coming of the baby, but the new creation. Pause, give yourself space for quiet reflection, as we anticipate the gift that is the Emmanuel – God with us. It is in Advent, in waiting, in the already and the not yet that we, like Mary prepare for the birth of the one who changed everything. It is in Advent that we prepare our hearts and our lives for the one who is to come.

A very blessed Advent to you all.

Love and peace in Christ,

OFFICE HOURS

Rev. Edie keeps regular office hours:

Monday - 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Tuesday & Thursday

8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Our secretary Bernie Roche is in the office on **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays** from 11:30 AM to 7:30 PM.



WORSHIP SERVICES, READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

As we enter the Advent Season, we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, as the child in the manger and as the Savior of the world who has promised to come again. This season we will reflect on the promises of the prophets as the people of God anticipate with the hope, peace, joy, and love promised in the Word of God.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2019

(Communion)

1st Sunday of Advent

Sermon Title: *Advent Hope*

9:00 a.m. Adult Education

10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship and
Youth Sunday School**

5:00 p.m. **REV Worship**

Readings: Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 24:36-44

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

2nd Sunday of Advent

Sermon Title: *Advent Peace*

9:00 a.m. Adult Education

10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship and
Youth Sunday School**

5:00 p.m. **REV Worship**

Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 3:1-12

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

3rd Sunday of Advent

Sermon Title: *Advent Joy*

9:00 a.m. Adult Education

10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship and
Youth Sunday School**

5:00 p.m. **REV Worship**

Readings: Isaiah 35:1-10; Matthew 11:2-11

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

4th Sunday of Advent

Sermon Title: *Advent Love*

9:00 a.m. Adult Education

10:00 a.m. **Morning Worship and
Youth Sunday School**

5:00 p.m. **REV Worship**

Readings: Psalm 80:1-7; 17-19;
Matthew 1:18-25

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve

Sermon Title: *Christ Has Come*

4:00 p.m. **Lessons and Carols**

11:00 p.m. **Lessons and Carols**

Readings: Luke 2:1-20; Isaiah 9:2-7;
Psalm 96

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29

1st Sunday of Christmas

One Church, One Service

Sermon Title: *Gifts: Given and
Received*

10:00 a.m. **Worship only**

Readings: Isaiah 63:7-98;
John 1:14



Christmas Reflections

*How do you prepare for
Christmas?*

*How are you taking the time
to prepare your heart for the
coming of Christ?*

*How are you living hope,
peace, joy and love?*

*How can you pass them on
in this season of the year?*



"Sharing at the Table"

Then my soul shall rejoice in the Lord, exulting in his deliverance. Psalm 35:9

As we look forward to December, permit me to quote the song of Mary from Luke 1:45-55:

"And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."



Love and Hugs and Merry Christmas!

Arlene Pearson

WE LIFT IN PRAYER



The following is a complete list of those we are remembering in prayer.

NOTE: If you are on this prayer list and wish to be removed or you would like to be added to the list, please call Rev. Edie or the office. **Also, if you have any pictures of any individual(s) for whom we are praying, please bring them to the office and the photo(s) will be posted on the bulletin board in the Knitting Room.**

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF HEALING AND THOSE WITH HEALTH CONCERNS.

Albert; Alyssa (Deb); Aurora (Dave B); Barb B; Barb M; Bob D; Bob K (Bernie); Bob Noel (Ar); Bobbi; Carol; Lieutenant Clint Sanders; Don & Carol (Ivy); Frankie (Bernie); Gert; Greg S (Gordon); Janice (Sue H); Jeff Z (Deb); Jerry & Joan Panko; Jim W (Andrew); Judi (Evelyn); Judy; Kailie (Karen G); Katey (Shirley D & Karen G); Kevin; Kyle W; Linda (Marcia); Linda L; Lucy D & Tom; Lynn & Greg (Diane); Natalie (Bernie); Pat P (Shirley D); Patt and Cliff P (Karen H); Patrick (Sue H); Peggy S's Mom (Andrew); Phil; Raymond (Diane); Richard (Tom M); Robbie (Gert); Ron (Greg); Ruth H (Jeni); Ruth S (Jeni); Sandy D (Ar); Shannon B; Shirleen (Shirley D); Steve Z; Sue (Bernie); Susie (Karen G); Walter

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED OF STRENGTH AND HEALING.

Six-year old Addy & Grandma Barb (Karen H); Allison & two children (Theresa); Alex T; Ashley G (Greg); Carla Z (Linda); Cassiello family; Cindy & Alexandria; Debbie (Shannon's mom); Craig M (Gert); Dan Ciametti; Diana; Dick V; Don (Debbie); Doris (Diane C); Eva M; Linda D (Ar); Lori (Debbie); Mary O'Connell (Grace); Melissa; Pat Z (Shirley D); Patti (Jeni's sister); Randy (Susan); Richie (Ar); Shirley A; Stephanie (Debbie); Steve (Gordon); Sue H; Tom; Tristen; Theresa L; Tony (Maryann); Wanda (Jeni's mom)

WE PRAY FOR GROUPS WHO ARE IN NEED.

All leaders in authority; Israel; our children and youth ministry; our country's divisions; our enemies; people of other faiths; persecuted Christians; policemen and firemen; those affected by other natural disasters (floods, wildfires, tsunamis, earthquakes, snow storms, volcanoes, cyclones, tornadoes)

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MOURN.

For family and friends of Jean Somerstorfer who died November 18; family and friends of Jimmy Rehbock who died October 31; June and family (Mel); Lloyd Simpson's family (Gert); family and friends of Mack B (Lorrie C's brother); family and friends of Ar's niece Marie who died November 4; family and friends of Marina (Mel); for victims and their families affected by violence

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN NEED DURING MISCELLANEOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

Anthony in the Marines; Bill (Bernie); Colin (Ar); Gerry, Olivia, Holly and Meghan (Toni); Karl Haack in the Marines; Marissa (Theresa); Mark Gulotta in the Marines; Matt; Mike (Karen H); Rachel & Juan; Savino (Deb)

WE PRAISE GOD FOR LEADING US! GOD IS IN CONTROL!



UPDATES

upstairs and downstairs. Please bring a plate of your favorite Christmas cookies or sweets to share at our refreshment table. Free will donations will be accepted at this event.

December 22 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Enjoy *The Most Wonderful Time of the Year!*

Looking Ahead to 2020

The Christian Education Committee will meet on Sunday, January 5 at 11:45 a.m. We have already begun planning for 2020 activities and look forward to a Faith Formation Class (formerly Confirmation), Sunday School, Kids Club, and Souper Sunday (February 2).

Plans have also begun to organize a noon Lenten Series, Easter activities and more.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Advent Activities

Advent is a busy season!

Hickory Hills Presbyterian Church is fortunate to receive, each year, a tree to decorate at Brookfield Zoo's *Holiday Magic* event. This year our tree is located near the carousel at the north entrance to the zoo. Our tree is #329.

A reminder that Kids Club *will not* be held on Monday, December 23 or Monday, December 30. Kids Club will resume on Monday, January 6, 2020.

December 1 – First Sunday of Advent

Our children will be making and decorating Chrismons during Sunday School. These Chrismons will then be used to help decorate the sanctuary's Christmas tree on December 8. Chrismons will also be made during Kids Club on December 2.

December 8 – Second Sunday of Advent

Our 10:00 a.m. service will include lessons of the meanings of Chrismons and decorating our Sanctuary's Christmas tree.

The service will be followed with a potluck meal and Chrismon crafts. Sign-ups for attendance and potluck donations are located upstairs and downstairs. Meat and beverages are supplied by HHPC. Please plan to join your HHPC family to decorate the tree and then have some good food, and make your own Chrismon. Better yet . . . make a Chrismon for yourself and one for the Sanctuary tree.

December 15 – Third Sunday of Advent

A **Cup of Christmas Tea** will begin at 1:00 p.m. Entertainment is being provided by musician Don Reitsma. This is always a beautiful event. RSVP is requested and sign-ups are located

MISSIONS

As cold weather approaches, you'll see the **Tree of Warmth** in the Narthex. If you're able to knit or crochet hats, scarves and mittens, they would be lovely decorations for the tree. Naturally, purchased hats, scarves, or mittens and gloves would be wonderful as well! The Kids Club and their families, and other local children will be warmer because of your thoughtfulness.

As is our tradition, the Jones Center **Children's Christmas Gift Tags** were placed in the Narthex. With your generosity, all the tags were taken home, gifts brought back, and with many thanks to Dave Delaney, the gifts were delivered to Jones Center.

Included in this newsletter is an **Advent list of pantry items** (*see p. 9*). Similar to getting a special treat every day of Advent, we challenge you to bring a weekly bag or box of items for Elsie's Food Pantry. If you can't/don't want to shop, please mark an envelope addressed to "Elsie's Pantry" with your donation, in the offering basket. We'll be happy to shop for you.

The **Feed My Starving Children** collection basket and M&M tubes are in the Narthex. Mark your calendars now for February 15.

We would like to get a group together to pack at North Central College in Naperville. This is a **Feed the Need!** packing event. Plan on bringing one or more nonperishable food item(s) with you. Through Loaves & Fishes Community Services, you can double the impact, helping to feed local need. Expect another John Gino's support day. More information will follow.

For the Twelve Days of Christmas, we will be collecting needed items for the BEDS program. We will print a list soon!

Blessings! --Kim Ambrosat



**CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
AND POTLUCK (Meat will be provided.)
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8**

10:00 AM – Worship Service/Program
11:00 AM – Potluck (sign up available upstairs
and downstairs)
11:30 AM – Crafts with Chrismons



“A CUP OF CHRISTMAS TEA”

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019 - 1:00 P.M.

Holiday Entertainment by Musician Don Reitsma

*Please bring a plate of your favorite Christmas cookies
or sweets to share at our refreshment table.*

(A free will donation will be accepted for the program.)

For more information and to RSVP,
call Dianne Flynn 708-598-3100.



**HHPC
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
To elect elders and deacons
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8
(FOLLOWING WORSHIP)**



HHPC CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

**LESSONS AND CAROLS
4:00 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.**

Join with your HHPC family
as we celebrate the birth of our Savior!

**ONE CHURCH, ONE SERVICE
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29
10:00 A.M.**

Potluck of Christmas leftovers to follow worship. Come and celebrate Christmas together. Don't make another dish for the potluck--bring what you already have. *(Meat will be provided.)*

Craft Fair

HHPC Holiday Bazaar

The HHPC fundraising committee is pleased to announce that 40 tables were sold to crafters and vendors for our Annual Holiday Craft and Vendor Bazaar on Saturday, November 2. Total sales were \$2,600 including 20+ holiday baskets donated by Shirley Dragas (\$300).

The Fundraising Committee would like to thank everyone who donated, attended and volunteered. It was a great day for fellowship and community involvement.

Looking forward to our 2020 bazaar!

Merry Christmas,
Grace Muszynski & Susan Frangella



May God bless those who are celebrating their birthdays in December. Peace, love and joy always!

DECEMBER

1	Darlene Delaney	16	Gina Ciametti
1	Melanie Swindle	16	Greg Nirtaut
5	Dawn Morgucz	18	Riley McKinney
5	Tristen Grisko	19	Steven Beal
12	Tom Treccani	20	Natasha Swindle
12	Bryan Ambrosat	25	Natalie Orsic
15	Gabriel Meyer	29	Laverne Mocarski
16	Jayden Kenealy	31	Carla Zabelka

Note: If you should notice any omissions or errors on the birthday list, please report them to the church office.



For HHPC Members & Friends

The Connecting Link will now publish only the names of those members who have submitted a change in their contact information. However, more information can be provided upon request by calling the church office.

Recent notification received:

- Carla Zabelka has moved.

If you have a change to your personal contact information, please contact the church office.

Phone: 708-598-3100

E-mail: hhpc@hickoryhillspres.org



How do people start attending church?

A Friend Invited Me	86%
Organized Visitation	6%
Invited by the Pastor	6%
Advertising	2%

Churchgrowth.org

Sharing Tree

DECEMBER 1
Box of Cereal

DECEMBER 13
Box of Crackers

DECEMBER 2
Peanut Butter

DECEMBER 14
Package of Rice

DECEMBER 3
Boxed Potatoes

DECEMBER 15
Package of Oatmeal

DECEMBER 4
Macaroni & Cheese

DECEMBER 16
Package of Pasta

DECEMBER 5
Canned Fruit

DECEMBER 17
Pet Treats

DECEMBER 6
Canned Tomatoes

DECEMBER 18
Chicken Noodle Soup

DECEMBER 7
Canned Tuna

DECEMBER 19
Tomato Soup

DECEMBER 8
Box of Cereal

DECEMBER 20
Can of Corn

DECEMBER 9
Jar of Applesauce

DECEMBER 21
Can of Mixed Vegetables

DECEMBER 10
Jar/Can Potatoes

DECEMBER 22
Can of Carrots

DECEMBER 11
Package of Pasta

DECEMBER 23
Can of Green Beans

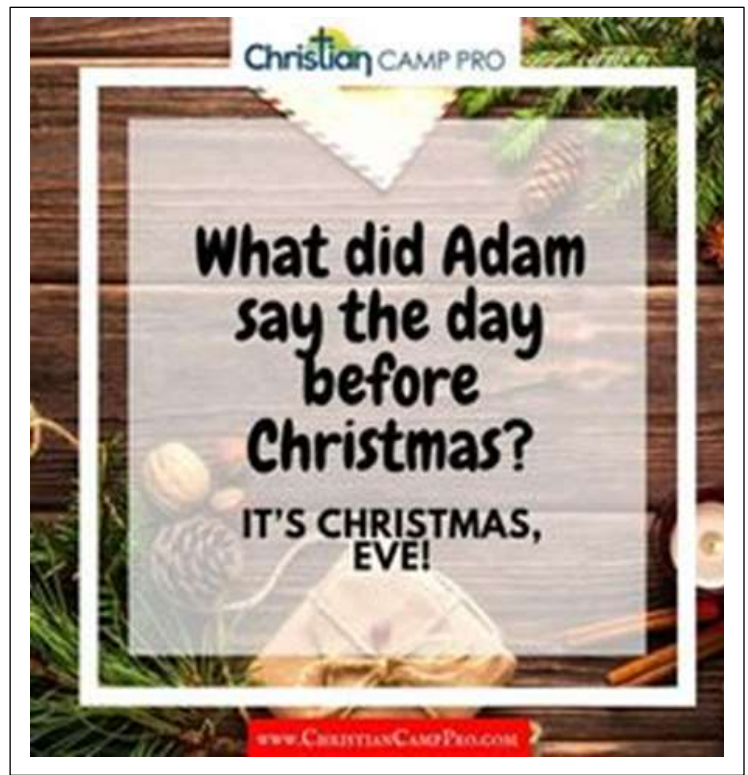
DECEMBER 12
Canned Beans

DECEMBER 24
Can of Fruit

We are used to Advent Calendars that day by day reveal a piece of chocolate or other treat as we move through December and anticipate Christmas.

This year we at Hickory Hills Presbyterian are celebrating Advent not in receiving but in giving. Each day is assigned an item of food for donation to Elsie's Pantry.

You can participate daily, weekly or for the month. Collections can be turned in at any time but are due by December 29. If you prefer to simply make a donation and have someone else do the shopping, the amount for the full calendar is \$36.50.



May your Christmas be filled with lots of love and LOL with family and friends!



DECEMBER 2019

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 9:00 AM Adult Education 10:00 AM - Worship & Youth Sunday School (Kids make Chrismons) 11:15 AM Fellowship, Prayer Shawl Ministry & CE 5:00 P.M. REV	2 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 3:30 - 5:00 PM Kids Club (Kids make Chrismons)	3 11:30 AM - 7:30 PM Office open 7:00 PM Worship & Music	4 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	5 11:30 AM - 7:30 PM Office open 4:00 PM - TOPS 7:00 PM - Yoga	6	7
8 9:00 AM Adult Education 10:00 AM Worship (Kids lead service) & Youth Sunday School After Worship: . Congregational Meeting & Elections . Potluck Meal & Adult Chrismons . Community Planning Meal Meeting 5:00 P.M. REV	9 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 3:30 - 5:00 PM Kids Club 7:30 PM Session	10 11:30 AM - 7:30 PM Office open	11 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	12 11:30 AM - 7:30 PM Office open 4:00 PM - TOPS 7:00 PM - Yoga	13 4:00 - 6:00 PM Arab Women's Fellowship	14 9:00 AM - 11 AM Breakfast With Santa Jones Center (Chicago Heights)
15 9:00 AM Adult Education 10:00 AM Worship & Youth Sunday School 11:15 AM - Fellowship, Prayer Shawl Ministry & Missions 1:00 PM Christmas Tea 5:00 PM - REV **Newsletter Content Due**	16 1:00 PM - Women's Bible Study 3:30 - 5:00 PM- Kids Club	17 11:30 AM - 5:30 PM Office open	18 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	19 11:30 AM - 7:30 PM Office open 4:00 PM - TOPS 7:00 PM - Yoga	20	21
22 10:00 AM Worship & Youth Sunday School 11:15 AM Fellowship, Prayer Shawl Ministry & 5:00 PM - REV	23 NO WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY OR KIDS CLUB 10:00 AM - NEWSLETTERS MAILED	24 4:00 PM AND 11:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship (Lessons and Carols)	25 Christmas Day 9:30 AM Prayer and Care in our homes	26 11:30 AM - 7:30 PM Office open 4:00 PM - TOPS 7:00 PM - Yoga	27 4:00 - 6:00 PM - Arab Women's Fellowship	28
29 10:00 AM - One Church, One Service, Potluck to follow	30 NO WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY NO KIDS CLUB	31 HAPPY NEW YEAR!				

OFFICE CLOSED